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SOME EFFECTS OF MUSIC.

MUSIC is a means of producing powerful impressions, of which skillful men, in all ages, have availed themselves. To prove this, it is not necessary to go back to the fabulous times of Amphion and Orpheus; it will be sufficient to cite some historical facts in which melody is seen exercising a mighty influence over the moral as well as the physical nature of man. It is true everybody does not enjoy the privilege of yielding to the emotions it inspires: indeed, people are to be met with who, though highly gifted in other respects, both intellectually and morally, declare that they derive no more pleasure from listening to music, than to the rumbling noise of a carriage along the road. On the other hand, there are persons from whom anything in the world might be obtained by the aid of this truly divine art. Timotheus inspired at will all sorts of passions in Alexander by means of musical impressions; Saul, when a prey to gloomy melancholy, was delivered from it by the sweet sounds of David's harp; and Homer tells how physicians lulled by music the severe pain which Ulysses suffered from the bite of a wild boar. In fact, it is well known, that it was music which inspired and elevated the minds of poets and prophets of ancient times. Music lost none of its influence by passing through the hands of the Christian Church.

In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, such a vertigo, or violent giddiness in the head, prevailed among the population of Italy, that the persons seized with it soon fell into a state of extreme prostration, accompanied by delirium, and an uncontrollable impulse to commit suicide. This epidemic spread throughout all classes without distinction of person. A tragical end was the usual consequence of the disorder, which was erroneously attributed to the bite of the *tarantula*, a species of spider very common in the south of Italy. But whatever may have been the real cause of the malady, the only effectual remedy consisted in playing certain musical instruments, according to the individual predilections of the sufferers—sometimes the guitar, sometimes the flute, and sometimes even the trumpet: it was always, however, music alone that operated as the means of cure. At the sound of the first few notes, the invalids awoke from their stupor, and lent an attentive ear; soon their limbs lost their stiffness, beat time, and followed all the various modulations of the instrument; their movements became more and more decided, and at length they ended by dancing with great animation. When the instrument ceased, all their activity was suspended, and the prostration, with its sad consequences, invariably returned. It was necessary to continue the music without interruption till the sufferers sank down from fatigue. At this moment, a gentle sleep came over them, and they afterwards awoke perfectly restored.

Albert, Duke of Bavaria, the son of Frederick, alleviated the pains of gout by continued strains of sweet music; and Gessner mentions an Italian who adopted the same remedy with equal success. Dodard, a French writer, gives an account of a musician who was deranged, and for whom no other cure than music could be found. As soon as he heard the first notes of Bernier's cantatas, his countenance was seen to assume a serene aspect, his convulsions ceased, and shortly after he soothed his feelings by a flood of tears. It is well known, also, that a celebrated *improvisatore* at Florence was sometimes for several days unable or unwilling to produce a single stanza on a proposed subject; but if the musician Nardini excited his imagination by playing certain airs upon the violin, his power of improvisation was speedily recovered. Rousseau speaks of a lady in whom music awakened involuntary laughter.

Nor is it men alone that experience the influence of music. It has long been observed that the sound of the trumpet produces a peculiar excitement in horses. Bernardin de Saint Pierre, the author of *Paul and Virginia*, states that spiders, in the corner of a room in which music is performed, never fail to go towards the part where the performer is seated as

soon as he commences playing, and retire to their hiding-places when he concludes. Sir E. Home studied the effects of the pianoforte upon the lion and the elephant; he observed that the attention of these animals was powerfully excited by the upper notes of the instrument, and that fury glared from their eyes at the sound of the lowest notes. An experiment of the same kind was made at Paris, in the year 1799, upon two young elephants, a male and a female. An orchestra, composed of excellent musicians, performed various pieces of music. The first effect produced upon the elephants was that of astonishment; but they soon testified their pleasure by the strongest demonstrations. M. Fétis, chapel-master in Belgium, more recently made remarkable experiments upon other animals. It would be unpardonable injustice to the immortal Shakspeare not to quote his well-known lines in connexion with this subject.

"For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood:
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music; therefore, the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in his soul,
Nor is not moved by concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, plots and stratagems.
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted."

A PEEP AT COUNTRY COUSINS, AND HOW IT ENDED.—LETTER V.

Whitehaven, January 1st, 1821.

MY DEAR FATHER,—May the bright sunshine of this splendid morning be an auspicious omen that a happy and prosperous new year awaits you; though it saddens me to think, that before its close I shall no longer be an inmate of my dear old home. I do not really know myself how it has come to pass, that my future lot seems likely to be cast amongst these Cumberland hills, nor how it first dawned upon me that my own happiness could only be fulfilled by agreeing to minister to that of my high-principled and very superior-minded cousin Robert. Well! I shall leave the subject veiled in mystery, and give you a few particulars about Christmas. On the eve of the 25th, a party of mummers, dressed in most fantastic costume, came to the Friars, and were admitted into the hall, where we saw them enact *St. George and the Dragon* with great spirit; though one of the Armstrongs, whose family peculiarity I have mentioned before, and who played the part of the King of Egypt, could not restrain his laughing propensities, and in the midst of a solemn charge to the doctor on doing his duty, burst into a loud guffaw, that proved highly infectious to most present, while it scandalised old Sally to the last degree. She even carried her resentment so far, as to present the luckless wight, when the play was ended, with a bowl of buttermilk, instead of the hot ale that had been prepared for the players; but my uncle took care that every mummer should receive an ample dole of meat, bread, and wassail piping hot, and half-a-crown to boot; so all withdrew well pleased. They were succeeded by a droll set of very young boys and girls, who, in shrill childish treble, shouted rather than sang some old rhymes, commencing, "Ule, ule, ule, three puddings in a pule." They, too, were allowed to come into the hall, and were then persuaded to sing one or two carols more gently, and consequently more pleasingly. Sally brought them some milk, but on my uncle's insisting that the half-starved urchins should partake of the

ale, a large old-fashioned silver tankard was produced, furnished with pegs stuck in at regular intervals; so each child was made to drink what filled the space between two of the pegs, and I was made to comprehend the literal meaning of one's spirits being a peg too low. A plate heaped up with narrow but substantial mince-pies, baked in the form of a horse's manger, in commemoration of Advent, was next handed round, and the happy little band went forth again into the freezing atmosphere. At breakfast, on Christmas-day, we were each complimented by the gift of a dough image, meant to represent the Virgin's holy infant, which had been sent by the chief baker in Whitehaven. The day was brilliantly cold, and the evergreens glittering in the most exquisite frost-work embroidery, seemed to invite one to go out and enjoy the clear, bracing air, and wander forth amidst the white sparkling fairyland around us. We accordingly set off for church half an hour before the usual time, and thus came in for the droll spectacle of a country wedding, Christmas-day being a favourite anniversary for the purpose. On arriving at the church, we found it occupied by the village school-boys, who have from time immemorial been privileged to levy a monied tax upon all bridal assemblages, which goes to the fund for supplying coals for the school-room fire. We were looking at the beautiful decorations of the interior of the church, formed by wreaths of evergreens and magnificent branches of yew, holly, box, and ivy, which custom Robert told me had been employed even in apostolic times, as a token that our Saviour was born at the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles, thus marking the season of the year in which the advent took place, when a cry from the village lads of "They're coming," sent us to the entrance door. Picture to yourself a motley assemblage of men and women all mounted on horses of every description, racing in the utmost confusion at the fastest speed towards the church. An elderly spinster reached it first, and very proud she seemed. I could scarcely believe this was really the expected wedding party, nor that they had ridden thus, starting from the bride's house, at least six miles. My aunt said they were indebted to the frost, which had rendered riding at all anything but safe, for their unusual exemption from the mud, which generally bespatters alike both men and women on such occasions. On leaving the church, the bridegroom gave sixpence to the delegated scholars, who held a plate at the door, and every one who wore boots and spurs was obliged to follow his example, but those who could only boast of boots, minus spurs, were let off with the payment of threepence. The bridal party then re-mounted their steeds, and rode off again, pausing, however, a few minutes on the brow of an adjoining eminence, to listen to a congratulatory poem, recited in a loud yet snuffling voice by the head boy of the school, which was rewarded by a donation, that went towards the book fund. Of the fun we had that same evening, I have already written to you, and, indeed, the amusements of snap-dragon, dancing, yule-log, and banqueting are too well-known, even in London, to need detailing; and the only novel features in the evening scene, were the pleasant admixture of rich and poor, gathered

together under my uncle's hospitable roof, and the importance which appeared to be universally attached to the foretelling of one's fortune in divers mystical ways. To-day I received many kind gifts from my uncle, aunt, and cousins, accompanied by the warmest assurances of welcome into their family. But though these winged messengers of love flew freely about the household within doors, I soon became apprised that it is considered unlucky to give anything out of the house on New Year's day. Not even a lighted candle is permitted, nor may the refuse ashes be cast out from the hearth, nor a bit of broken meat be bestowed upon a hungry beggar. This last requisition placed my aunt in a great dilemma about an hour ago, when a thinly-clad little girl came over the hills to ask for some broth for her sick mother. The child was shown in and told to warm herself by the kitchen fire, while my aunt sat lost in thought, and my uncle, with a satirical, though good-humoured smile, silently watched the progress of her meditations, being indifferent himself to the superstition, but certain that his excellent wife would cut the Gordian difficulty without infringing the decrees of fate. Presently, she said to the child, "Is your mother very bad to-day?" "Oh, yes," was the tearful reply; and then my aunt said, "Did she tell you to inquire how the family of Mr. Lonsdale were this morning?" "She bid me ask," responded the little girl, "how the good lady was?" "That will do," said my aunt with a highly satisfied air, and leaving the kitchen for a few minutes, she returned laden with food and clothing, which she bade the child carry home, but to mind and be sure she told her mother that the things were no presents, but had been sent in return for sending such kind inquiries so long a distance on New Year's day. I doubt greatly if the strange message would be correctly delivered, but my aunt appeared quite content; and I must not omit to tell you that before I had risen this morning, Sally roused me from the most luxurious nap by entering the room, candle in hand, and with an earnest request that I would not go a step down stairs until I had either gone *up* the garret flight, or had mounted on a chair in three upstairs apartments, in order that I might be sure to rise and not go lower in the world during the next twelve-months. Of course I complied. I was yesterday interrupted in my letter by a call from the young couple whose wedding we witnessed on Christmas day; they came to beg a little corn, and were making a round of calls on their friends and neighbours, who had each given them a small quantity, and these donations would set them up in seed for their first crop. This custom is called "corn laiting." I shall hardly, I suppose, undergo this ceremonial, but the writing about it has brought the future before me so strongly that I feel little inclination to continue my descriptions; besides, next week I shall be once more at home, when we can talk over fully all I have heard and seen since I came here. Yet, six months hence, if you will condescend to visit the Cumberland mountains, very proud, indeed, will you make your truly affectionate daughter,

DORA HARCOURT.

THE FIGHT FOR THE STANDARD.

ENGLISHMEN were never engaged in a struggle of which they might so justly be proud, as the civil war of the roundheads and cavaliers. In none did the sterling virtues of their character, their love of liberty and of country, their hatred of tyranny, their readiness to submit to all losses and all griefs for the sake of the right, their indomitable energy in battling for it, the strong, steady, dazzling glare of their native inborn courage, stand out in bolder relief. In none did the points of contrast between them and foreigners appear so strongly. A contest which produced such men as Hampden and Falkland, Colonel Hutchinson, Fairfax, and Cromwell, is

sanctified if only for having given birth to so many worthies. In the cropped and shaven ranks, of which Cromwell's army was composed, under those sour and demure visages, there lay an energy that could conquer the world. That army was the most terrible instrument of destruction that has ever existed. Could a modern general muster ten regiments, composed of the same elements, the same enthusiasm, fanaticism, interest in the quarrel, stern morality, fiery imagination, the balance of power were at an end, for he might set his feet on the necks of kings. This union of spiritual fervour and exultation with sound practical sense, of boiling enthusiasm with steady energy, was